

Dear Chairman Powell and Commissioners,  
As a citizen who wants to be informed about the political and electoral issues that affect my life, I am greatly disappointed by the lack of informative television programming.

Local public affairs programming is virtually non-existent--constituting less than one half of 1% of all local programming. More than half of news broadcasts prior to the 2002 elections did not include a single campaign story. Our democracy is at risk when many Americans don't know basic facts about the candidates or the issues, as was the case in the 2000 elections.

Since broadcasters have clearly failed in their obligation to serve the public interest, the FCC should define meaningful public interest requirements that include local civic and electoral affairs programming. At a minimum, broadcasters should air three hours per week of local civic and electoral affairs programming, with at least two hours devoted to substantive election coverage in the six weeks prior to Election Day.

As the elections approach, a well-functioning democracy demands that citizens have access to a diversity of opinions and voices on the choices confronting us.

I am tired of being treated as a "consumer", someone to be marketed to and used only to increase the profits of the media and its advertisers. I care about what is going on in my government and on the political scene. Just because the media wants the candidates to pay them for running ads... the issues and the candidates are still news to me and I want to be informed - not marketed to. Also, require at least some of these major networks to carry the debates! Don't let them pass to broadcast mindless t.v. for which their advertisers are paying them! I want to be able to see and hear the debates!

Sincerely,

Sharon Martinez  
P. O. Box 4475  
University, MS 386774475